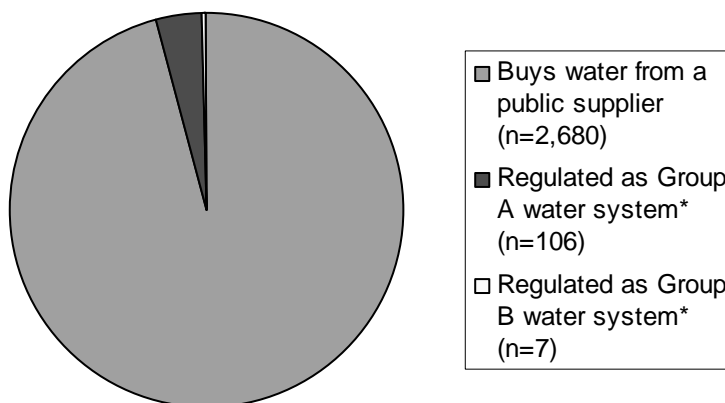


### How schools get their water in Washington



\*Includes some school districts

### Schools that do not own their water source

Nearly all of the 2,793 public and private schools in Washington buy their water from public water systems. The Washington Department of Health works with these water suppliers – public utility districts, cities, private water companies, etc., -- to assure they deliver safe and reliable drinking water to all their customers, including schools.

Although water delivered to schools by public water suppliers must meet federal and state standards, it is possible for contaminants such as lead, copper, and cadmium to leach from school plumbing after the water gets on site. Water systems are required to test for lead and copper in a sample of their customers' plumbing fixtures. If these samples exceed regulatory limits, water systems are required to take action to make their water less corrosive. Under current law, follow-up beyond federal and state safe drinking water requirements is each school or school district's responsibility.

### Schools that own their water source

In Washington, a total of 113 schools or school districts have their own well or other source of water and are subject to the same federal and state requirements as any other water supplier. In addition to maintaining their own plumbing and dealing with contamination issues that arise, these schools and districts must also regularly test their water for contaminants.

#### *System size matters*

Federal and state drinking water requirements vary, depending on the size of a water system. In Washington, large water systems (typically those that have 15 or more connections or serve 25 or more people) are called "Group A" systems. Smaller water systems are called "Group B" systems.

*Group A systems:* Schools that qualify as Group A systems must meet all federal and state requirements for public water systems. They must:

- Hire a certified water system operator to run the system.
- Protect and secure the source of water.
- Submit to routine inspections.
- Prepare planning documents.
- Take action to conserve water.
- Keep the water system in good repair.
- Test the water regularly to be sure it is free from contamination.

There are about 4,000 Group A water systems in Washington, and 106 of these are schools or school districts.

*Group B systems:* Schools that qualify as Group B water systems (serving fewer than 25 people) are exempt from federal Safe Drinking Water Act requirements but must meet state and local requirements. State requirements include:

- System design review and approval by the Department of Health or a local health jurisdiction before construction.
- Source water protection
- Water quality monitoring for bacteria, nitrates and other contaminants
- Water conservation
- Record keeping and reporting.

There are more than 13,000 Group B water systems in Washington, and just seven are schools or school districts.

## **For more information:**

### **Washington Department of Health**

Office of Drinking Water: 1-800-521-0323

Home page: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/default.htm>

How to test for lead in a school's drinking water:

[http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/Publications/water\\_quality\\_self\\_assessment\\_2.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/Publications/water_quality_self_assessment_2.htm)

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

Drinking Water home page: <http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/watedrinkingwater.html>

Information on drinking water in schools and day care facilities:

<http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/schools/index.html>